

Interview

with JustOne Crosby



Western Michigan University student, JustOne Crosby was chosen and supported by MSGC to attend our annual Capitol Hill day trip to meet with members of congress to discuss MSGC and the different programs and opportunities that we have to offer.

A Summary of your day on Capitol Hill:

We arrived at The Hill around 9:30 am and stayed until 5:00 pm. During our time there, we met with several legislative members in the offices of the Senate and House of Representatives. We wanted to let Congress know how impactful their support has been for MSGC and other NASA Space Grant consortia and safeguard their continued support. Having received the MSGC Undergraduate Fellowship nearly a year ago, I had plenty to talk about. I was excited to provide an update on my research project and speak on the unique experiences I have been awarded by MSGC. Capitol Hill is a bustling place, but I am glad that we were able to connect with members of Congress in a more personal setting.

Explain any magical or interesting moments that had a positive impact on your experience.

Although we walked most of the day, having the opportunity to commute between the House and the Senate offices using the underground Capitol subway system was fascinating! I am thrilled that I was able to experience this intimate aspect of our country's history and inner workings.

Tips for future students attending?

My advice is to anticipate a bustling environment, but a lot of fun. Many of the legislators you will meet with will have packed schedules and are making time and space for you. We met with some members in their

obbies or the hallway when there was nowhere else to meet. It is essential to use that time and space wisely. All the members of MSGC are incredibly supportive and great collaborators; lean on them, and ask for feedback between presentations, to adapt your delivery as you move along. Despite being busy, take this time to get to know your fellow team. I spent the day on Capitol Hill with Dr. Mark Moldwin (U of M), Katie Klink (U of M), and Madeline Nykaza (U of M, DC Office). Being the only student and only one from Western Michigan University, I was interested in their roles in MSGC, their university, and who they are as people. In between our meetings, they shared stories with me about their lives in D.C., graphic design, and Antarctica. I valued this opportunity to learn more about this great group of individuals beyond the surface level.

What was your overall takeaway?

From researching the past 11 months, I understand how much work it takes to bring one project to fruition. It takes immensely more effort, time, and energy to bring forth the multitude of projects NASA funds each year through its consortia. Advocacy, as we completed in D.C., is one crucial part of establishing the support required to promote undergraduate and graduate research.

D.C was challenging to navigate, being that it was so hectic. At times, our meetings were short and in unconventional spaces. Nonetheless, the conversations we had were rich, and the legislators were very intrigued by what we had to say. Although these situations were not the most convenient, our group remained focused, adapted to each meeting, and valued each other's input. These efforts led us to success.

Did you have time to do anything else while you were in DC?

The morning before our visit to the Capitol, I was able to visit the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The museum had striking architecture with six exhibit floors that would take days to thoroughly consume. I highly recommend everyone to visit the museum, and I hope to revisit my next time in D.C., to learn more

Would you go again?

I definitely plan to go back to D.C., and I would love to support MSGC in a similar capacity. I am incredibly thankful for being chosen by MSGC for this opportunity. The entire experience was unique and full of learning. I hope to pursue many more experiences like this in the future.